

ESN

Edmonton Street News

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Homeless not all
living on the street



Vendors pay 50 cents per paper

City Groups That Provide Meals

Bissell Centre

10527-96 Street 423-2285
Sunday 12:00 -1:30 p.m., sandwiches and
snacks after church service
Monday to Thursday -
10:30 a.m. - sandwiches
Tuesday and Friday - noon - hot lunch for
women
Friday 9:45 a.m. - sandwiches

Christ Church 12116-102 Avenue 488-1118
5:30 meal every 3rd Saturday of the month

Herb Jamieson Centre 10014-105A Avenue
429-3470

Only for men who are not on assistance. If on
assistance, they must get permission form
their worker

Monday to Friday - 7:00 to 7:45 breakfast
12:00 to 12:45 p.m. lunch
5:00 to 5:45 p.m. supper
Weekends 11:00 to 11:45 a.m. brunch
4:00 to 4:45 p.m. supper

Edmonton Inner City Victory Church

10665-98 Street
Friday 7:00 to 8:00 meal

House of Refuge Mission

10339-95 Street
Daily-8:00 p.m. meal

J-Jirel Mission Soup Kitchen - East

11905- 82 Street 489-9138
Wednesday and Sunday 4:00 p.m. meal

J-Jireh Mission Soup Kitchen - west

10137 - 150 Street 489-9138
Thursday - 4:00 p.m. meal
Sunday - 10:00 a.m. meal

Lighthouse Ministries 3010-119 Avenue
423-1277 or 474-8086

Wednesday and Sunday
1:00 and 7:00 p.m. meal

Marian Centre

10528-98 Street 424-3544
Daily except Wednesday
12:00 to 12:45 p.m. meal
Closed from the 27th of each month to re-
open the 1st of next month

Mustard Seed

10636-96 Street
426-5600
Monday to Friday 7:00 to 8:00 supper
Zero tolerance of alcohol

Operation Friendship

9526-106 Avenue 429-2626
Monday to Friday - 9:00 a.m. breakfast
Monday to Sunday - 12:00 noon lunch
5:00 p.m. supper
for seniors 55 and over only

Red Road Healing Society

4225-118 Avenue 471-3220
Tuesday and Thursday - 5:00 p.m. meal
Friday - 12:00 to 1:00 soup and bannock

River of Life Church

11368-95 Street 479-6762
Thursday and Friday -
11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. lunch

Robertson Wesley United Church

10209 - 123 Street 482-1587
Second Saturday of each month -
5:00 p.m. meal

One Accord Bible Church

Corner of 108 Ave - 93 Street
Saturday - 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Salvation Army

9620-101A Avenue 242-9222
Friday - 7:30 a.m. breakfast

St. Peter's Lutheran Church

9606 - 110 Avenue 426-1122
Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday - 7:00 to
9:00 a.m. breakfast

St. Faith's Anglican

11725-93 Street - parish hall
477-5931
Thursday - 12:30 p.m. soup
Saturday - 8:30 to 10:00 a.m. breakfast
3rd Friday of the month - 7:00 supper

Victory Café and Soup Bar

13411- Fort Road
Monday - 5:30 to 6:45 meal

Women's Emergency Accommodation Centre

9611-101A Avenue 423-5302
Meals for women staying at the shelter. If not,
a bag lunch is given.

Edmonton Orthodox Reformed Church

11610 - 95A St.
Worship Services 10AM & 6PM Sunday
Mondays 6:15 Youth Gym Night
Thursdays 6:15 Soup & Study - Free!
Info: Pete Wright - 479-1860
www.orcsrc.org

B's Diner -100 Street and Whyte Avenue -
meals, Wednesdays 1 to 3 p.m.

Jasper Place Health and Wellness Centre -
15210-Stoney Plain road - meals - Mondays 7
to 8 p.m.

Free Soup, sandwich and other food items at:
One Accord Bible F Baptist Church
10802 - 93rd street,
from:
10:00 to 1:00 pm
Saturdays
for Info: 425-6310
or 710-6311

Nightmare on Ninety fifth Street

About two months ago I had a strange nightmare in which I was trying to move and the house and out buildings were all crammed full of junk. I saw the stuff inside the house in a cut-away view, and there were piles of junk under tarps on the ground. I dismissed it as concern over having to sort through all the accumulated papers in my office, until I found myself living the dream.

My family and I became temporarily homeless, living in a hotel for more than a week during the past month, when we had to move from our home on 109 Avenue to another house also managed by the Central Edmonton Community Land Trust from whom we have been buying a rent-to-own home. Our house was sold to pay off the bank mortgages run up by dead-beat tenants, and the new owners wanted to get started on renovations as soon as possible. We were transferred into the house of a woman named

Kim, who had defaulted on her rent for, by her own admission, about the past two years, and had been evicted.

The final moving date was March 1st, so the land trust sent over a maintenance man with a truck on Monday, February 26 to start moving all of our stuff. After one load, however, the maintenance man said to finish packing and he would be back the next day. Kim had not moved out, and there was no room to put anything. We were piling one household on top of another. The garage couldn't be used either because it was already stuffed to the top with Kim's things, as was her neighbours garage and that of another of her friends. In the meantime, she was slowly and painstakingly sorting out the rest of her possessions, and placing them in piles on blankets in the yard. That was a mammoth job with the huge amount of stuff she had.

By the second afternoon, most of my things were moved out to the new place, and my family was checked into two hotel rooms – Glen and I in one, my daughters and grandson in the other. I took the pets and plants to one of the small rooms in the new house that wasn't crammed full of Kim's stuff, and managed to clear enough floor space to put down a mattress on the floor next to our five bicycles, so after two days, I moved into my new home. Kim was slowly sorting things, bag by bag, and moving them outside. She even took the time to clean items, and to tape boxes together.

My computer was the last thing I moved over. I finished the March issue sitting on the basement floor with my computer in front of me still connected to the Internet in my old home. All the furniture and other possessions had gone on ahead. As soon as the proof reading was done, I emailed the issue to Gazette Press, then packed up the computer. At the new house, I cleared off a kitchen counter, and got set up to continue working with the Internet connected. As Kim sorted and removed bags and boxes, they piled up in the yard until there was a wall of stuff five or six feet high the length of the back yard on either side of the sidewalk. It is unbelievable that so much could even fit in a four-bedroom house.

People who stopped by stared with

disbelief at the lawn. Ivan Miller brought over a story, traversing the length of the back yard through past the piles of stuff, and found me sitting on a metal stool at the kitchen counter working. "This is really a home office," he said.

As Kim moved bags outside, the piles in the yard continued to grow and spread. It took three days for her to clear the upstairs bedrooms, then another day for the kitchen. Finally she started on the basement which



was buried beneath truckloads of haphazardly piled up junk. The basement, which she wouldn't let anyone see when I first looked at the house, had boarded up windows. When I finally got to take a look, I discovered that it was filled up as though someone had stood on the top step and simply pitched more and more bags and boxes down. Standing on the basement steps, I counted at least five broom handles poking out from the piles. Maybe Kim simply didn't have the energy to take garbage out to the back and instead pitched it down.

There were also three dead appliances in the basement, and she had set up a washing machine and dryer on the main floor in her small living area beside the kitchen. The kitchen had two large refrigerators, one still filled with food. She had newspaper taped on the windows of the door "so no one would be able to see what she had and steal it". I thought it would be a blessing if someone took the whole lot. Even with it laid out on the lawn, no one wanted it.

The more I saw Kim, the stranger the situation seemed. Gradually I pieced together part of her story. She had moved in six years before with a husband and six children. She said she had cancer and was waiting for treatment, and she had suffered from depression. Over the years, her children left, some removed to foster homes, her husband and her separated, and, as they left she had filled the vacant rooms with more and more stuff and lived in a smaller and smaller living space until things accumulated to the point where, when I first saw the upstairs, I could hardly see the walls and floors of the three bedrooms and bathroom. All I remembered of those rooms was seeing bags and bags and bags of stuff, and an absence of doors. Her husband had been addicted to gambling, so didn't always pay the rent, and once she was by herself, she couldn't pay the rent and utilities with her welfare checks.

Until Kim's things were finally removed, I couldn't even begin to unpack anything because there was no space to shift boxes and furniture, and most of my clothes and dishes were buried somewhere, so for two weeks I wore the same jeans and top, and went to teach classes wearing the same black two piece yoga outfit. In the meantime,

Kim was in no hurry to get finished with her moving out. She was staying first at the women's shelter, then found a room in a rooming house with a reputation as a crack house, so there was nowhere to move her massive accumulation of belongings.

My daughters and grandson stayed on in the hotel for ten days until their bedrooms were painted. The rooms had been badly used, by, Kim said, her children who had learning and behaviour problems.

Finally, the Land Trust told her they were removing the stuff from the basement and throwing it out. By then, the upstairs was painted, so my kids were able to move back home. It took the maintenance man from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. to remove most of the junk from the basement, even after Kim had been working down there a whole day before he came in. When he brought the truck around to take the junk to the dump, Kim appealed to the next door neighbour, and moved boxes, bags, furniture, etc. over there, piling it up on their porch and in their back yard. Only one load went.

The last room Kim cleared was the front porch where she had a deep freeze with six large turkeys, which for some strange reason she threw out on the lawn. My son came over and asked, "What are all those turkeys doing out front?"

Kim just left them there.

Seeing that she had forgotten to take over the turkeys, I put them over the fence into the neighbour's yard to be with the rest of Kim's stuff. Unfortunately, my daughter and the neighbour came home at the same time later that day. When he saw the turkeys, he started swearing and threw them back over the fence. Fortunately for me, he thought the maintenance man had done it.

Gradually, we have been able to take possession of our new home, and to have the necessary repairs done. There is still a major battle ahead, to get Kim's stuff out of the garage, and I may have to look at all that junk on the neighbour's lawn for some time to come. As for Kim, I think she needs a warehouse to store all of those possessions, or, barring, a good psychologist to help her with her obsession to collect stuff.

The strangest thing about the whole experience, however, was the day Kim said, "I'm good person." I've been wondering ever since how she came to that conclusion. I finally decided that she is in denial, and really doesn't realize how her actions have affected others – myself, my family, the Land Trust, the neighbours, Kim's children, her husband, and I don't know how many more. Maybe she bases her evaluation on the way she presents herself to the public as a soft-spoken, polite, tidy looking woman, who teaches cooking classes. It is as though she is two different people, and there is a disconnect between the two realities, that woman, and the one who hoards junk.

I am thankful that in the end, I come out with the winning hand. I have a home. I am left wondering if I should have had more compassion for Kim saddled with the tremendous burden of her amassed possessions.

By Linda Dumont

Jasper Place Health and Wellness Centre builds community



Eddy celebrating his birthday at JPHAWC. He got a radio from Murray (the director). There were lots of people who were depressed and the party cheered everybody up. Eddy was told not to come in until 10 a.m. because that was the time the party started. The spirit of giving spread through the crowd, with people sharing smokes.

Story By Michael Thornton, Photo by Erin Bayus



Eddy's best buddy, Roy, signing the card.

Photo by Michelle Yorham



Gail giving Phillip a complimentary trim at JPHAWC.

Photo by Erin Bayus



The storage room at JPHAWC where people can keep their personal belongings. If they are transient, they can centralize their important papers. The more they gather and keep in the storage room, the better their sense of well being.

Photo by Erin Bayus



Street feet from having to keep moving to keep moving around. Feet are the worst when you are on the street.

Photo by Erin Bayus

Roomate Disaster



On Nov. 15 2007, I moved from my downtown apartment, to a beautiful condo in Riverbend. At first I was allowed to live by myself in this three-bedroom condo, with a back yard and no inner city hooligans! Then my landlord informed me that I was only paying 1/2 of

the rent and I needed to share this mansion with roommates, as the total rent was \$1,000 per month. I put one add in the Edmonton Journal and successfully had phone calls coming in. Then I made the mistake of asking for some roommates at church, and a young couple said that they were in desperate need of a place to stay as they moving out of their mom's home. They begged me to let them come and live in my new mansion in Riverbend. They had already moved in before Tom (not his real name) told me that he had a criminal record, a probation officer and was going to ADAC! Tom's wife Susan also had a bad character reference, and was in the methadone program for drug problems. Both Tom and Susan told me that all was ok, and they had made a commitment to the Lord and quit drugs a year ago! This was the start of losing my mansion in Riverbend, as life from Dec. 15 on turned into a mayor disaster.

Both Tom and Susan smoked liked troupers, even in the middle of the night, so I informed them that no smoking was allowed inside and they convinced me that they would only smoke outside. I felt as though the hooligans I had left the inner city to escape had now come to live with me.

The couple assured me that their lives were now clean because they had asked the

Lord into their hearts. Then Tom told me that he had a probation officer and I had to talk to her. Wonderful. My nerves were getting more upset every minute. I could not tell these two to move out because Susan's grandma had paid the first months rent. Also, because Tom and Susan were recommended to me by a friend from the Baptist Church, I thought I could not go back on my word.

They came to live in the apartment with nothing. All of the dishes, towels, and other household items were mine. The next thing I knew Tom told me, that they wanted my TV in their room and they also wanted to borrow my DVD player, plus they were using all of my dishes, my couch, my computer and my phone. As this couple continued to live with me, they got harder and harder to live with. They also smoked outside which I suppose was ok; but I never liked this because smoking was against the rules. Many times when I came home late at night, Tom would tell me that he and Susan needed their privacy and I did not belong there. I always paid my \$500.00 share of the rent plus the utility bills, while they on the other hand got way behind on their rent and never paid any utility bills. Since the EPCOR and phone were in my name, I had to pay them.

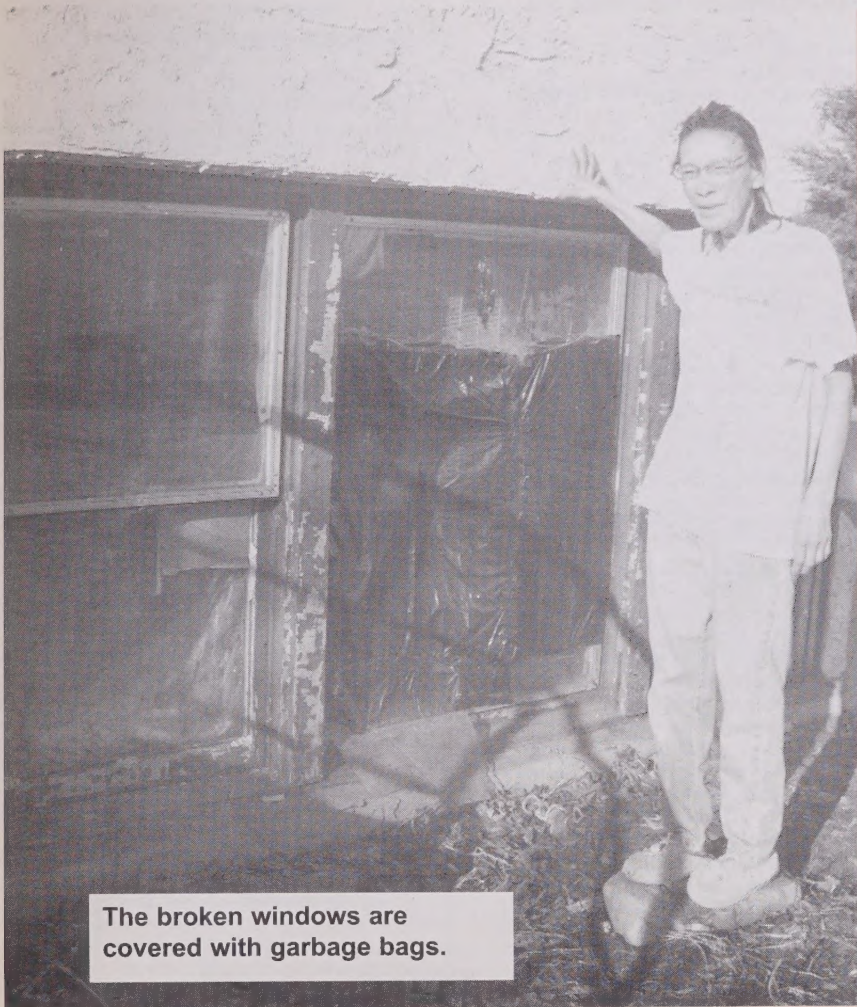
Within the second month of Tom and Susan staying in this condo, I thought that I smelled a foul odor, maybe marijuana or pot. This was a very overpowering smell so I decided to go and stay with a good friend for a week. I contacted the landlord, and all they could tell me was that this smell was coming from the condo upstairs where the tenants apparently were taking drugs. I never really believed this or trusted my roommates again on this issue because they had been on drugs a year ago and still used vulgar language. One night I was trying to

sleep and they turned up their movie too loud and started arguing. I had to tell them to be quiet at 2:00 a.m. so I could sleep.

Finally I was tired of coming home every night to my roommates who needed their privacy. Susan and Tom also told me that I was who was not allowed to bring any of my family home, although as a single person I was paying the same amount of rent as the two of them were. They acted as though they owned this place. I had enough of this couple and told them, that if they did not move out I would. When they didn't move out, I ended up being the victim in this disastrous situation. I informed my landlord again that I was moving out and he told me that it was not my fault, he was on my side and Tom and Susan would have to move out because they were behind on paying their rent. Tom and Susan got a letter from Susan's doctor, stating that she had an epileptic seizure, and she was not well enough to move out. Her grandma and extra funds from Social Services covered the other their back rent. In the end, even though I had followed the rules, I could no longer stand living with these young hooligans and I had to move out. I was trying to get my things out a week later, with permission from my landlord. I still had my key to my former home; therefore, I dared to go and move my stuff out without Tom and Susan being home. I came back the next day to find a note on the door, saying not to come in unless they were there or they would charge me with breaking and entering. This was outrageous. I will never share a condo with a couple of young hooligans again as long as I live!

In our world today, it seems there is no justice and the good folks continue to get punished and the wicked ones seem to win out. Therefore at the end of Feb. 2007, I once again had to move and find a new place

Tenant disgusted by lack of maintenance



The broken windows are covered with garbage bags.

Broken windows are covered with dark, green, plastic garbage bags, a poor protection against intruders and the cold, but Cookie still sleeps on a mattress below the windows in the kitchen of her two-bedroom apartment at 9650-82 Avenue. Although the windows were broken as a result of vandalism by Whyte Avenue youth, and a police report was filed the beginning of February, the landlord refuses to replace the windows. With the low vacancy rates and the influx of people from out of province, it's a landlord's market, so they don't have to be concerned about filling vacancies or even keeping up repairs.

"Now that we're a booming province, they can up our rent any time they want to, and they don't have to worry about us moving out because there are so many people looking to move in," said Cookie. She has been renting the two-bedroom basement suite, paying \$650 a month, for four years. "We are stable clients. We have been renting from the same landlord for eight years, first on the north side, then here," she said.

During the time she has lived on Whyte Avenue, as things broke, they stayed broken. The toilet doesn't work – she has to use a

plastic bucket to flush and the linoleum is blackened by water damage. The kitchen tap doesn't just drip, it runs, the leaking plumbing in the suite above creates a further problem with water leaking through the ceiling. The paint on the inside of the freezer section of the refrigerator is blackened and peeling.

"The health inspector looked at it and said she's seen better in the dump," said Cookie.

In spite of her problematic apartment, Cookie has a heart for the homeless people in the area, letting people stop by to take showers, and she has several living in her apartment on a temporary basis. She said she needs donations of socks, and a backpack to



Cookie uses a bucket to flush the toilet.

Story and photos by Linda Dumont

The tap doesn't drip - it runs.



carry the socks in so they can be given out on the street, as well as towels, shampoo, soap, deodorant and shaving supplies. Food donations are also welcome.

in, one that I will not have to live with any disastrous roommates telling me how to live. Since moving I am one of the couch surfing homeless in our city. I have been trying to find another apartment, but it is very difficult because you now have to pay \$600 a month for a one bedroom place, and you have to have money up front as landlord's won't hold a suite. If I can't find a place by the first of April, I will have to move in with another friend as the apartment rules won't allow me to stay on where I am now.

By Norma Harms

They called her "Care Bear"

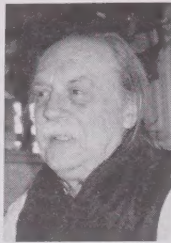
Carrie Lyn Cardinal, popularly known as Care Bear by those who knew and loved her, passed away last month. She is deeply missed by her relatives and many friends. Care Bear was known for her big heart in helping people, her warm smile and caring 'bear hugs'. She was in the Royal Alex for a few days before she died, but had been sick several times during the past year.

Care Bear always greeted me with a hug and a smile. I shall miss her and hope to greet her in heaven some day.

By Pedro Schultz

Housing 101

The sin that dare not speak its name



Allan Sheppard

Allan Sheppard is a freelance writer and editor, and a volunteer writer for Edmonton Street News. As a pensioner, he finds himself from time to time on the edge of poverty and homelessness. As a self-appointed community elder, he thinks and worries about the needs of children, youth, parents and others who face lives of poverty and inadequate education in the midst of unprecedented wealth.

Certain words are not in our federal finance minister's vocabulary

When Finance Minister Jim Flaherty gave his budget speech in March, certain words did not cross his lips. Poverty, for one. Homelessness for another. Housing managed to squeeze through the barriers of teeth and lips on only one occasion, and that not in the context of poverty or homelessness.

Perhaps the minister believes that if he does not mention such things they will go away. Think of it as the three-monkey school of policy and politics: Speak no evil. See no evil. Hear no evil.

There really is a sense that in the minister's and the government's obsession with positioning for an election poverty is inherently evil, a sin visited upon one by wayward parents, in turn to be visited (as it must be) on one's own children.

There is a second sin implied in the budget: not to be a family. "With the high costs of living, housing and energy," the minister tells us, "parents struggle daily with the challenge of raising a family."

The minister continues "There were many personal tax relief options we could have pursued in the budget. We made a choice. We chose to support hard-working families."

I have written before that I have no idea what a "working," still less a "hard-working," family is. There are many kinds of family. Not all of them have the ability or the opportunity to work. Are they less Canadian or less worthy because of that?

At least I now know what a family is: "(W)e are ending the marriage penalty for

single-earner families through an increase of the spousal and dependent amounts to the same level as the basic personal amount. ...

"(That)," says the minister, "is a policy to encourage commitment and marriage, not penalize it."

There you have it: Man. Woman. Married. With children. Family.

No mention here of the non-marriage penalty. (Another sin that may go away, if we ignore it?) Single parents have costs that are at least equal to, if not greater than, those of two-parent families. Yet they must now pay more in taxes than a single-earner married family with the same income. Want the same recognition and benefits from our government? Get married. And one of you should stop working. The agenda is carefully hidden by spin, but it's there for those who want to see it.

About a third of the way through his speech, Minister Flaherty listed four "Canadian values," including these two: "(W)e help the vulnerable and aspire to help one another," and "(W)e are a caring people, and aspire to support people who need our help." It's not easy to see how the government's narrow focus on the family serves those values.

Oh, yes, there is a Working Income Tax Benefit proposal to "help people over the welfare wall" by minimizing to an unspecified degree the penalties faced by single parents who take low-paying jobs. That's all well and good, and thanks for caring. But exactly how does making it easier to take and stay in a low-paying job address the Canadian-value based objective of helping single parents out of poverty? It may help the problems of unemployment, which are considerable, but it will not do much to increase income. And even that small gesture seems more designed to placate the suburban middle class voting base that the government so clearly covets than to make a real difference to Canada's working and unemployed poor.

The challenges of poverty, homelessness, and high-cost housing will not go away because our government ignores them. Housing and effective community supports are at least as important as tax-based subsidies in helping the working and unemployed poor become what the vast majority of them want to be: net givers, rather than takers, in society and the economy.

Policies that focus on Canadians as voters, rather than as citizens, will not achieve that goal.

Neither will acting as if poverty and related problems do not exist.

Managing information

*Government spin machine in overdrive
Sometimes a story is as good as it needs to be*

By Allan Sheppard

Introduced by a heading that says "Managing growth pressures," the headline to a March 5 Alberta Children's Services media release proclaims. "Government invests in people who serve children, youth and families." The release goes on to say that "The government will invest approximately \$13.5 million annually to address the issue of recruiting and retaining staff to work in day care centres and family day homes, agencies contracted by Children's Services and women's shelters."

I get nervous when governments talk about investing in programs. Investors do what they do to make money in the short or long term. Governments provide services not because they are actually or potentially profitable, but because they are necessary and best delivered by government. In this case, Children's Services is making a defensible response to a real problem faced by important agencies doing important work in an overheated, inflationary job market. Nothing to apologize for or blunderize there.

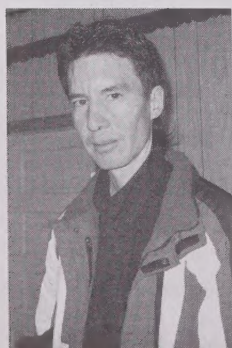
The government is doing what it should do with this announcement. I would be happy to commend the minister and the premier for doing the right thing in a more or less timely fashion. But there they go, tarting the whole thing up as an "investment." Next thing you know, they'll be referring to the Albertans they serve as "consumers" and "customers." (What's that you say? They already do that, or did when King Ralph was in charge? Pity)

To make matters worse, the release throws "investment" numbers around like confetti at a wedding: \$7 million here, \$1 million there, \$6 million over there; some of it is this year's money, some of it is spread over two years, some of it is in addition to existing budgets. It's as if they don't want us to think they are actually spending any money but can't resist telling us how much money is leaving the provincial coffers, confusing everyone in the process, perhaps even themselves.

There are situations when the spin cycle is useful and necessary, usually in times of political, environmental, economic, or inter-governmental crisis. That isn't the case here.

This could be a good news story. Why spin the life and guts out of it?

Assault by mall security witnessed by human rights advocate



September 2006 I entered City Centre Mall west. I was on my way back from a business meeting so I was wearing my good business attire. A ruckus at the top of the escalators drew my attention as well as that of several other witnesses. A large Native male had a large Native security officer in

some sort of chokehold. They struggled until two Caucasian security officers came around and grabbed the Native male, wrestled him to the floor, then handcuffed him and kept him still. At least two of the security officers were using profanity. An older gentleman, whom I figured was Oxford Security head, came over, mobile phone in hand, giving his staff instructions, and dialing 911.

I continued to watch. Suddenly the security head deliberately kicked the downed, handcuffed and restrained individual. I walked up and stated who I am, what I do, and that what I witnessed was not only assault, but also discrimination. The

Caucasian security head then tried to tell me that under some obscure section of the criminal code security had the power to restrain an individual by any means. A second in command, security agent, not much older than me, told me to shut up, and that I was making a scene. The Native security officer then told me I was being kicked out of the mall. I requested that he serve me with the necessary papers to make this legal. Their boss then told them to shut the #### up. He repeated the same thing a couple of more times. He also said things like "prison talk", "High on drugs". The very idea of denial, deception and blatant disregard for my people regardless of who started the fracas made me want to slug him, only I bit down hard and kept my mouth shut, keeping as assertive and professional as possible.

A couple of young people, one being an advocate herself, approached me out of earshot of the racist security force and asked me what sort of advocacy work I was involved in. I told them, and was asked if I'm a lawyer. I said I might as well be one.

While sitting down with one of the witnesses, we watched the security guards conduct their investigation, collect witness statements from only two individuals, from the closest shops to the incident. It seemed strange that these two women were asked and no one else. It was apparent that the

Oxford Security was a little too interested in my human rights investigation because the Oxford Security head approached one of the witnesses and me, produced a witness statement saying he'd allow me to read it provided I told no one. I hesitated, as I didn't want to be involved in a conspiracy, which had the potential to turn deadly. I read the statement memorizing certain parts, then once the security force was gone, interviewed the two shopkeepers in question myself. The first woman was all in favour of how the security handled the case, and her manner was very cold and narrow minded. The second woman I spoke with was more pleasant and outgoing, and answered my questions. I left.

I'm aware that I have the security head and his team scared knowing it's only a matter of time before I track down witnesses, interview them, and take the matter to the police. Should he or his cronies attempt to threaten me or intimidate me, it isn't going to work, because as an advocate in the human rights field, I know my rights, and am not afraid to do what is necessary to defend the human rights of others.

Ivan Miller
Human Rights Advocate
Ivan Miller and Associates Inc.

We are all treaty people

There is an unforgivable omission in 2007 federal budget speech

By Allan Sheppard

In a recent speech, Adrienne Clarkson told a Vancouver audience that, as governor general, she would often visit classrooms that included First Nations and non-First Nations students. She would ask for the

exchange that neither satisfies nor dignifies either party). Or we give it as an allowance (another inappropriate way of looking at the exchange that treats the government as parent and First Nations people as children). What we have never done (except, perhaps, in negotiations leading to the Kelowna Accord of 2005) is to treat First Nations people as equals—as treaty people in the only mean-

part of any effective response) but as an act of nation-building and First Nations-building.

Stephen Harper's federal government is unforgivably delinquent in its dealings with and attention to First Nations, and its failure to recognize the aspirations of First Nations in the budget, or anywhere else.

First Nations people should not forgive them their unforgivable oversight.

We should not forgive them, either. Not if we truly aspire to the national greatness Minister Flaherty, in his budget speech, challenges us to achieve.

National greatness is not just a matter of economics and competitiveness in markets. Those are important things, and we must pay attention to them. But they are no more important than integrity. They are no more important than trustworthiness. They are no more important than good faith. They are no more important than respect, for our treaty partners as for ourselves.

We are all treaty people.

(As I finish this gloomy meditation on the failures and shortcomings of our federal government and its predecessors in relation to First Nations, I remind myself that the last government to negotiate a forward-looking agreement with First Nations people, the Kelowna Accord, lost the next election. The party that won that election is now the government—a minority government that may be reluctant to turn over any stones that could jeopardize its chances to win the next election, which is not far away. There are many words to describe such manipulation, if it exists. Leadership is not one of them.)



students in the class who were "treaty people" to raise their hands. Only the First Nations students would respond. The rest would keep their hands down. The reality that Madame Clarkson pointed out to the students and to her lecture audience is that all Canadians—not just First Nations people—are treaty people. We are all treaty people.

Most treaties with our First Nations were made by British colonial authorities on behalf of the Crown, then represented by Queen Victoria. When Canada gained the rights and privileges of self-government through the British North America Act in 1867, it assumed responsibility for the obligations, including treaty obligations, of the Crown in Canada. When Canada enlarged Ontario and Quebec, and added and expanded new provinces to the north and west, Crown treaties in the acquired lands again became Canada's treaties.

As citizens of the self-governing nation of Canada, we are parties to those treaties, as our parents, and grandparents, and great-grandparents were, and as our children, and grandchildren, and great-grandchildren will be. And we are all party to any treaty signed by the Canadian government on its own behalf, and ours, since then.

We are all treaty people.

Whether native-born or naturalized-immigrant Canadians, we enjoy the rights and privileges of citizenship. We also accept the responsibilities and obligations of citizenship, including treaty obligations.

We have already received the benefits of our treaties with First Nations. We have taken the most and the best of their lands and, with a few accidental exceptions, their resources. In the process, we took away their livelihoods and their pride, and we have done our best to take away their culture. In return, we have given them minuscule plots of uneconomic land as reserves and told them that their cultures were neither worth having nor worth preserving. In return, we give them money. And we do it grudgingly.

We give them money not as rent (which would be one possibly appropriate way of looking at the exchange) but as a handout. We give it as if to a panhandler on the street (an inappropriate way of looking at the

ingful sense of the term, and as partners.

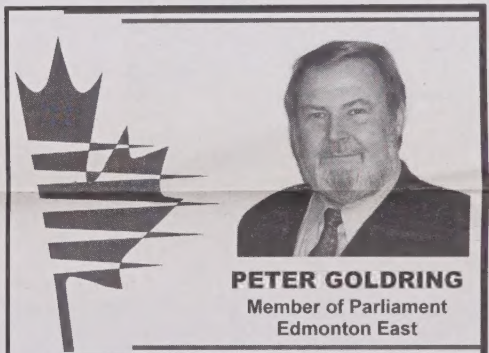
Yet we are all treaty people. And most of us know in our hearts that the treaty system is broken and needs fixing.

How then can Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Finance Minister Jim Flaherty justify or even explain the absence of any positive action or words about First Nations aspirations, or Canada's aspirations for First Nations, in the 2007 budget speech? There is but one passing reference: "We will provide a tough regulatory regime and standards for drinking water on First Nations reserves."

Having acknowledged a serious problem on reserves, the government offers not a solution or even a possibility of a solution among equals. It offers, instead, a veiled threat of regulations and standards to be imposed on the reserves that are responsible for their own water. This from politicians who are, we know, ideologically opposed to regulations and standards. This from a government that scrapped a Kelowna Accord that might have got all three affected levels of government—federal, provincial, and First Nations—to work together to tackle a range of problems in First Nations communities, not just the urgent problem of water safety on some reserves. This from a government that has done nothing since that act of negotiation to come to terms with its First Nations obligations and First Nations needs and clearly, on performance, does not intend to do anything soon. If ever.

For all I know, the Kelowna Accord was a fatally unworkable document (though it was agreed by the Liberal federal government of the day, all provincial and territorial governments, and participating First Nations representatives). If so, then we as treaty people—and the leaders who aspire (nice word, that; it appears many times in the budget speech in relation to government priorities) to represent us—have an obligation to come up with something to replace it.

We, and the federal government on our behalf, have an obligation to live up to original treaty commitments. We have an obligation to repair damage done by the mostly disastrous results of past policies and practices, such as the residential schools. We should meet those obligations not by spending more money (although that could be an important



PETER GOLDRING
Member of Parliament
Edmonton East

Canadian Government Delivers on Health Care

Canadians have a right to expect that the health care they need will be there when they need it. Unfortunately, this expectation has for too long gone unmet.

So the Conservative Government of Canada has taken steps to reverse the strain the health care system has endured by investing \$348 million to improve the system through a number of important initiatives.

Most recently, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced \$2.6 million for a Paediatric Wait Time Guarantee pilot project. When fully implemented, this project will ensure that the best medical care is delivered as promptly as possible to our children across six areas of surgery – cardiac, cancer, neurosurgery, sight, spinal deformity and dental treatment requiring anaesthesia.

Another wait time guarantee pilot project recently put in place will improve access to prenatal care for First Nations women on reserves. In the past, these women had been unable to access care as early as is optimal during their pregnancy. The early intervention this project will encourage will improve overall health for mothers and life-long health and well-being for their children.

In Budget 2006, the Government committed \$260 million over five years to the Canadian Strategy for Cancer Control and then last fall, created the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer to implement the strategy. This not-for-profit corporation will operate at arm's length from government and bring together cancer stakeholder organizations; patient, family and survivor groups; Aboriginal peoples; and governments. The coordinated national strategy will ensure that knowledge on cancer prevention and control is available quickly and delivered effectively to all those who need it.

In the coming year, the Conservative Government will implement numerous other health care programs that will address the problems left by the previous government. Canadians can finally feel confident that necessary improvements will be made to ensure the health care system delivers the care they need.

What do you think?

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Inner City Survivor



With reality shows popping up everywhere, here is the script for Inner city Survivor, a low budget production to be filmed on the streets of Edmonton's Inner city. Basic requirements are cameras, wages for actors, camera operators and two security people, and a prize of a trip to the streets of New York.

Duration for the production is twenty days for filming and one week of editing.

Estimated costs are #35,000. Potential earnings from viewing at theatres and

film festivals are \$125,000.

Here is an excerpt from the script for Inner city survivor.

Survivors muster at Quaser Bottle Depot on 95 Street five minutes before opening time.

Host: Smurf - "Run to the Bissell Centre. Last one there is eliminated."

Camera is pointed at the scrap yard fence.

Survivors arrive at the Bissell. Jimmy is the last one to arrive. Jimmy: "He F### tripped me. No Fair. I wanted to go to New York and pick up whores. Damn. "

Point of view: Inside the Bissell

Smurf: "Men, you are team Black Bull stay in here. Grab a table."

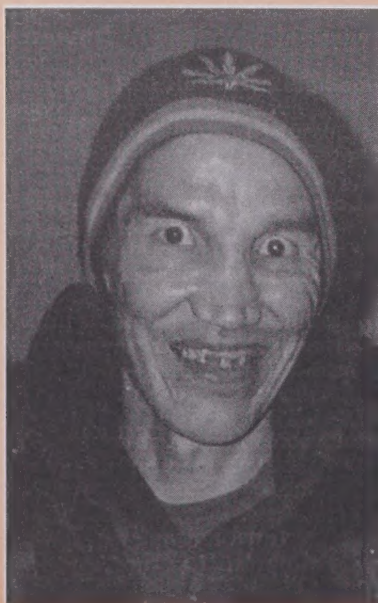
Getting off the street

By Henry Martial

I'm a man of few words. Promises are broken. It's time to buckle down and shut up and see what is real, cause I don't like bullshit and am not accustomed to handing it out. I like to speak the truth and if I hand out bullshit it's not worth nothing to me.

I was living on the streets for 34 years. I thought other people would do things to get me off. Then I realized I have to do it and I did.

I'm a man of few words.



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"Women, you are team Big Bear. Go outside."

Outside the Bissell team Big Bear quickly sets up camp. Inside Bissell team Black Bull is milling around, getting coffee and talking with people.

Smurf: "Moe, you are team captain. Go take a shower."

Outside Bissell Smurf approaches team Big Bear.

Smurf: "Chantel, you are team captain. Go take a shower."

In the bathroom, Precious is smoking a cigarette on the toilet.

Precious: "Chantel went into the shower for like seventy-five minutes. I don't know what she was doing in there but she sure wasn't taking no shower. She came out and her hair was dry. She didn't help set up camp and now she's team captain and acting like that. Pu-leese gag me with a spoon."

Smurf, with a coffee, inside: "OK men, go outside. You're going to play Red Rover against Team Big Bear for a reward."

Outside the door Team Black Bull excitedly exits the Bissell.

Point of View - bathroom number One.

Precious: "Red Rover for reward? I mean Pul-leese these guys outweigh us two to one and they get seven pounds of beef jerky. That's messed up. That's not fair. Like I'm sure."

Point of view - Inside Bissell. Team Black Bull is dividing seven pounds of beef jerky at their table.

Smurf re-enters with team Big Bear. "OK, the next challenge is for immunity. The team that loses will go to tribal council where someone will be voted out and asked to leave the Bissell immediately. Survivors run to the George Spady Centre."

Point of view- the back door of the Bissell as they run out the emergency exit setting off the alarm.

By Jeff Neufeld